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AN EXHIBITION OF AMERICAN ART

AT THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

BY LENA M. McCauley

THE autumnal exhibition of American paintings and sculpture at the Art Institute of Chicago is the signal for the annual awakening of the art season in the middle west. In view of its importance, President Charles L. Hutchinson, Director W. M. R. French, and their committees have spared no efforts to make it worthy of standing among the most notable exhibitions of the country, and in character indicative of present-day conditions and progress in the field of art.

As a result the paintings of 1911 are of a higher order than in the past. They have stimulating brilliancy of color, vigor of expression, and something definite to say, displaying a diversity of ideas in which a happy balance is held between the real and the ideal. These are the qualities which make this collection of 404 works of art vastly interesting and quite out of the ordinary. A painter who has been following the exhibitions on both sides of the ocean for some years declares that he has never seen so large a collection of uniform excellence in which there are no startling pictures, no really poor ones, and a greater number that are very good and might be called important.

This explains the splendid impression made by the galleries at first sight, and why there is no gallery of honor, nor chief room in which the superior canvases are hung together. The exhibition is representative of all sections of the United States and includes as well works by men and women abroad who still retain their American citizenship.

About 125 paintings were invited from artists who have a national reputation; 42 canvases came, likewise by invitation, from American artists living in France; and 200 more were selected by the jury from 920 works submitted. Fully one-fourth of the last—those accepted by the jury—came from local artists, the

majority of whom are members of the Chicago Society of Artists.

The sculpture is not conspicuous and although there is clever and attractive work in this medium the chief interest of the exhibition lies in the paintings, of which about half are portraits and figure compositions, and half landscapes.

It must not be imagined that because there is no epoch-making canvas nor group of work by men with new ideas to set the tongues wagging that the exhibition is without distinction. Quite to the contrary. Lacking the meretricious advertising of a few extraordinary pictures which would upset the balance of just criticism it upholds a higher standard than would otherwise be possible, and with greater dignity.

The first prize, the Potter Palmer gold medal, carrying with it the sum of \$1,000, was awarded the painting "Towering Trees," by Daniel Garber, which is reproduced herewith. It is an unusual composition, decorative in effect, showing a screen of lofty blue-green pepper trees on the marshy shore of a stream, beyond which one catches a glimpse of a distant landscape and bits of enchanting sky. At close range the patiently wrought detail claims attention, but viewed at a moderate distance minutia is forgotten in the beauty of effect.

The second prize, the Norman Wait Harris silver medal and \$500, was given to John C. Johansen's "Village Rider," a life-size portrait of a little girl on a white horse. It is a large canvas, but the theme is well rendered and winning.

A portrait of Asa H. Paige, of Boston, by Margaret F. Richardson, received the Norman Wait Harris prize of \$300. It is a frank portrait somewhat in the manner of the old school, but full of vitality and character.

The Martin B. Cahn prize, given for the best work by an artist of Chicago and



TOWERING TREES

AWARDED THE POTTER PALMER GOLD MEDAL

DANIEL GARBER

vicinity, was won by "Summer Time," a sunny orchard with figures by Frederick Fursman, who has returned recently from France.

Walter D. Goldbeck received honorable mention for a portrait of Josef Jorbel the sculptor, and another honorable mention was given to a sculptured group by Olga Popoff, an American residing in Paris whose work is attracting much attention abroad.

While the juries make decisions governing awards, the public goes its way of pleasure among the pictures in the nine galleries, passing opinions, which, after all, do not differ so widely from those of the critics trained in such matters with regard to what is really enjoyable, as some suppose.

The painters have apparently been fortunate in having interesting subjects for portraiture this year, and as a result there is none of that dead weight in fig-

ure paintings which so often gives dullness to an exhibition.

The best portrait of all of a man, yet one not in competition, is that of Charles L. Hutchinson by Louis Betts, painted for the University of Chicago. The concentration of power and interest in the face and head, rising above the somber dignity of official robes, reminds one of the superlative art of Lenbach.

From this it is natural to turn to Ralph Clarkson's fine-toned portrait of Dean Henry M. Bates, of the University of Chicago, which hangs on the adjoining wall. Ellen G. Emmett's portrait of James J. Cresswell, A. L. Kroll's of Dr. Edgar S. Barney, and Henry Salem Hubbell's of the venerable President Seelye are 'all strong works.

"Girl in Rose and Gray," by Robert Henri, has a prominent place in the first large gallery, and the delicately painted "Russian Dancer," by Irving R. Wiles,



VILLAGE RIDER

AWARDED THE NORMAN WAIT HARRIS PRIZE

JOHN C. JOHANSEN

lends distinction to the last gallery in the circuit. Alice Kent Stoddard's portrait of Elizabeth Sparhawk-Jones is a favorite, as are "The Gray Turban," by Joseph De Camp; "Primroses," by John W. Alexander; "Reflected Sunlight," by Childe Hassam; "Lady With a Fan," by Albert Herter; "Miss H.," by William T. Smedley; "The Yellow Rose," by Richard F. Maynard; "Mary," by Hugo Ballin, and "The Furs," by Robert Reid. Portraits by William B. Closson, Robert Vonnoh, Ernest L. Ipsen, Lawton Parker, Frank L. Werner, Albert Rosenthal, Adelaide Cole Chase, J. Alden Weir, and William P. Henderson, because of special merit, call for attention.

Paintings of children and child life give an attraction to the walls, and lend a note both human and appealing to the display. M. Jean McLane sends a

"Mother and Child" sympathetically painted, and there are, besides this, "The Sleepy Boy," by Edith M. Prellwitz, "Dutch Child," by Helen J. Niles, and other child pictures by Lydia Field Emmet, Marion Powers, Ella S. Hergesheimer, Lee Lufkin Kaula, Louise Cox, Elizabeth Peyraud, Mary Cassatt and Ethel Mars.

Although the figure painters aver that theirs is the more important task, it must be admitted that the sparkle of color and originality of outlook are to be found in this exhibition among the works by the painters of landscapes. It is these that give the sunshine and appearance of gleefulness to the exhibition. It has been a happy season for the painters out of doors! Defenders of the American school of landscape painting could find many a point to strengthen

their arguments in this delightful array of big pictures.

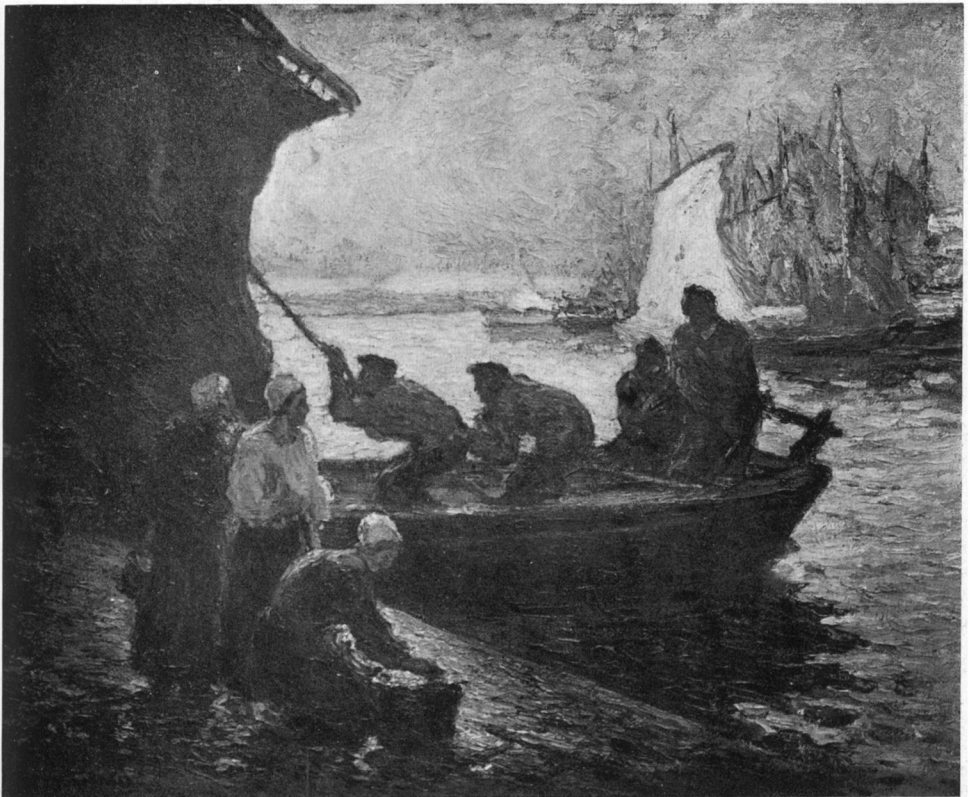
Edward Redfield's "April," Bruce Crane's "Awakening Hills," William Wendt's "When All the World Is Young," William S. Robinson's "Golden Days," Charles H. Davis's "Rocky Pasture," Charles Francis Browne's "Smiling Through the Rain," John W. Beatty's "Chilton Downs," and other works by Gardner Symons, Charles Melville Dewey, Albert L. Groll, Henry Rankin Poore, Ben Foster, Herman Dudley Murphy, Jonas Lie, Leonard Ochtman, Willard Metcalf, George Elmer Browne, Chauncey Ryder, and Joseph Boston illustrate the strength of this portion of the exhibition and the vitality of the art of landscape painting to-day.

Among those who went farthest afield for their subjects were Henry B. Snell, who contributed a picture painted "In

the Himalayas," John F. Stacey, whose best work is a view "Overlooking the Valley at Quebec," and Oliver Dennett Grover, who painted in Venice "Clearing," the best work he has yet produced.

But there are pictures which refuse to be classified, such for instance as "Sea Babies" by Max Bohm, "In Apron Strings" and "The Shoe Shop" by Elizabeth Sparhawk-Jones, and Frederick Frieseke's colorful canvases. Myron Barlow's two interiors bathed in the usual blue atmosphere and Walter McEwen's "The Shepherdess," "Idyl of Summer" and "At the Burgomaster's" are paintings to be remembered.

Ossip L. Linde has contributed several large, highly colored and very likable paintings of scenes abroad and among other works of special note are excellent interiors by Walter Gilman Page and Louis Kronberg of Boston.



VENETIAN FETE

OSSIP L. LINDE